

SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FOCUS



An Update for South Dakota National Guard Service Members and Families

800-658-3930

<https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/famsup/default.aspx>



STATE FAMILY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

I love the fall! Fall means the kids are heading back to school, pheasant and deer hunting seasons are around the corner, churches are launching new programs, combines are in the field, Friday night stadium lights are on, marching bands are tuning up (BTW - I attend football games to hear the band!), the leaves are turning, and the days are getting cooler!

If you have children, the end of summer could mean the completion of another milestone. For me, this particular fall brings to a close the middle school years as both our boys will now be in high school. Wow! I can count on ONE HAND the number of years before we are "empty-nesters" and our boys will leave home to attend college and begin their own lives. That makes me sad - I can hear that clock ticking a little louder each year.

This and other changes can catch us by surprise and maybe even get us down. This past year, you may have experienced a significant change in your family - perhaps a death, or a divorce, or a forced job change. My point is that CHANGE HAPPENS and sometimes it catches us unprepared.

This September 10th has been designated by the World Health Organization as World Suicide Prevention Day. Sadly, we all know someone, if not ourselves, that has personally been affected by suicide. If that is you, our hearts go out to you. The military too is concerned with growing stresses on their Service Members and families and is renewing their emphasis on prevention, health and resilience. In keeping, the Army has declared September as Suicide Prevention Month (see page 4). To assist you, we have included in this edition of *Family Focus* information on the World Suicide Prevention Day (see page 3) and some ideas for how you can participate in your community to prevent suicide.

Don't let CHANGE or discouragement or depression define you or your day. Find your way to a friend, to a clergy, to a Military Family Life Consultant, to a Vets Center or VA office, or to a Military One Source counselor. In the Soldier and Family Support Services team we have a lot of resources to help! And if that weren't enough, we can direct you to helpful community resources as well. Give us a call (800-658-3930) - we'd love to help!

Serving you, LTC Jacobson

PS. Got to go - the Marching Band is taking the field!

OPERATION MILITARY KIDS

"A hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."
- Christopher Reeve

Operation: Military Kids (OMK) is a program that believes military children are indeed Heroes. When deployments occur, our military children are called upon to be brave and strong, and as the late Christopher Reeves so aptly articulated, "endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles." How do we as a community, a society, say thank you for the sacrifices these children will make? OMK has created a way to say thanks and to give these Heroes a tangible salute. OMK strives to present every child, who's loved one is deploying, a Hero Pack. Hero Packs are backpacks filled with a variety of age appropriate items. The packs not only provide some fun and relief for the kids, but offers a way to stay connected to their deployed parents. Hero Packs might contain a stuffed animal, Frisbee, pens and pencils, journals, books, stationary, stamps and various other pieces. Every pack contains a disposable camera and a letter of thanks from a non-military child. Military children ARE Heroes, let's not forget to thank them openly and often. For more information contact Taryn Broomfield at 605-737-6919 or email at taryn.broomfield@us.army.mil.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER-

- 10- 451st Activation Ceremony- Sturgis, SD
- 10- World Suicide Prevention Day
- 21- 842nd Activation Ceremony- Spearfish, SD
- 24- Yellow Ribbon Sustainment Event- Chamberlain, SD
- 24- Veterans March- Mickelson Trail Black Hills, SD

OCTOBER-

- 18- Pro Patria Award Nominations due (see next page, ESGR)

MILITARY ONE SOURCE

All children experience stress at times. Toddlers may find it hard to adjust to new bedtime or child care routines. Middle schoolers may feel anxious about homework, tests, sports, or other pressures. Teenagers may worry about how to cope with demanding new classes, new relationships, peer pressure, or applying to college. The best way to help your child cope with stresses like these is to be aware of how your child is feeling and to provide ongoing support and encouragement. You'll find helpful tips in the book *The Secure Child: Helping Our Children Feel Safe and Confident in a Changing World* (Da Capo, 2003), by Stanley Greenspan. Here are a few suggestions from *The Secure Child*:

- Be available to your child. Try to spend some time alone with your child every day - for example, at bedtime or right after you get home from work - to encourage your child to open up to you about his pressures. "Children need to be able to seek us out when they're worried or scared," Greenspan says.
- Pay attention to schoolwork. A drop in grades is often one of the first signs of stress. If you see a drop in school performance, talk with your child and try to find out if she is feeling stressed. If she is, talk with her teacher or school counselor for ideas on what to do next.
- Involve your child in finding solutions. Stress can make children feel overwhelmed and helpless. Getting children involved in finding solutions can give them a sense of control and help them feel confident in dealing with their challenges. For example, if your teenager is feeling a lot of stress about an upcoming event such as a college interview, talk with him about what might help. Would he like to do practice interviews with you? Talk with students who have gone on interviews? Help your teenager take the steps he thinks would be most helpful.
- Model healthy ways to handle stress. Show your child healthy ways that you handle stress, such as by going for walks or listening to music to unwind. If you enjoy a few of those tension-easing activities together, you'll be setting a great example as both of you relax, unwind, and enjoy the pleasure of each other's company.

In most cases, the stress children feel is temporary and subsides when their situation changes. You can help your child by being aware of the signs of stress and offering extra love and support during especially busy and challenging times. If you have questions or concerns about parenting, call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 or visit www.MilitaryOneSource.com. Consultants provide resources and referrals on a wide range of issues, including those involving children and stress.



Todd A. Otterberg

Military OneSource South Dakota Joint Family Support Assistance Program Consultant

Office: 605-737-6292/Cell: 605-639-0409 todd.otterberg@militaryonesource.com

www.MilitaryOneSource.com or Call 1-800-342-9647

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

ESGR wants to ensure that our family members know that they are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers (of their Service Member) who have provided exceptional support to military employees above the federal law requirements. The Pro Patria Award is the highest recognition given by the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to one employer annually for their outstanding support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

Nominations will be accepted through October 18, 2011. I would highly encourage you to take time to nominate your Service Member's employer for this award as we all know the vital role those employers are currently undertaking to support their employees that serve in our Armed Forces.

The nomination is quite simple. The Soldier or family member completes the form, returns it to ESGR and SD ESGR will conduct interviews with the Soldier, employer and family members (if SM agrees) in order to put the best packet forward. To obtain a nomination form you can call ESGR at 605-737-6977 or e-mail CPT Christensen at lona.christensen@us.army.mil. Nomination forms can be faxed to 605-737-6088, or e-mailed to CPT Christensen.

CPT Lona Christensen

lona.christensen@us.army.mil

605-737-6540 (o)

605-431-5424 (c)



Karen Bekaert

karen.bekaert@us.army.mil

605-737-6977(o)

605-430-9943(c)

SOUTH DAKOTA YOUTH

On behalf of the South Dakota National Guard Youth Program, I would like to wish you well on your way back to school and thank you for all your support in our summer programs. This month the National Child Labor Committee is looking for outstanding volunteers and professionals, who dedicate their time and energy to improving the lives of America's youth. The Lewis Hines Awards seek to identify not the one-time hero, but the individual who has made a commitment to the well-being, growth and development of youth.

Nominations for this award can be made at <http://nationalchildlabor.org> no later than 30 September 2011. Awardees will be brought to New York City in late January 2012 where their selfless service will be recognized in a media-covered ceremony, and they will also receive a \$1000 stipend. The Youth Program would like to invite you to nominate someone for this prestigious award that has devoted their time, either professionally or voluntarily, to the lives of our young people.

Thank you for your service and support, and good luck in the new school year!

Please feel free to contact the South Dakota National Guard Youth Program with questions or concerns at the contact information below.

Candice Tvinnereim

Youth Deployment Specialist

605-787-3312

candice.tvinnereim@us.army.mil

Taryn Broomfield

State Youth Specialist

605-737-6919

taryn.broomfield@us.army.mil

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISOR

Have you registered for MyHealthVet yet?

This is your direct connection to the VA healthcare system. From this site you can monitor your healthcare and interact with your healthcare team, make appointments through the VA Healthcare system, refill prescriptions online, access your online electronic healthcare records and much more. Just go to www.myhealth.va.gov and click on the Register Today button in the top right hand corner.

President Obama vows not to slash Veterans Benefits.

Speaking at the National Convention of the American Legion, the Commander in Chief stated, "As a nation, we're facing tough choices as we put our fiscal house in order," the president said, *getting a standing ovation from the crowd of thousands in the process. "But I want to be absolutely clear: We cannot, we must not, and we will not balance the budget on the backs of our veterans. And as commander-in-chief, I won't allow it."*

DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP now hosts Virtual Learning Opportunities for demobilizing members of the National Guard, Reserve, our Wounded Warriors and their families. For a complete listing of seminar topics and dates, see the attached visit: <http://www.turbotap.org/register.tpp>

Kevin Speirs

Transition Assistance Advisor

(605) 737-6669

kevin.speirs@us.army.mil

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

Back to school can be tough. Here are some tips to help manage the stress.

Transition to High School

The transition from elementary or middle school to high school is difficult for many kids.

- Help your teen find out as much as possible about the high school he or she will be attending.
- Find out if your teen's high school has a buddy or mentor system.
- Talk with your teen about his or her expectations and concerns. Keep in mind your teen's experiences may not be the same as your own.

Social Life

Balancing a social life with school life can be difficult. Making friends at school and learning how to build relationships is an important part of your teen's development.

- Talk openly with your teen about the challenges of friendships and romantic relationships. If you feel comfortable you can share some of your own experiences.
- Make your home a welcoming place for your teen and his or her friends – take an interest and try to learn more about them.
- Encourage your teen to talk with trusted and responsible friends about their concerns.

Peer Pressure

Risk taking and experimentation are a normal part of growing up. A good strategy for concerned parents is to help your teen make healthy choices.

- Be available to talk to your teen about the choices they face with drugs, alcohol and sex.
- Listen to your teen's preferences and beliefs about drugs, alcohol and sex
- Make sure you and your teen are informed about alcohol and available drugs along with the risks.
- Frequent short talks have more of an impact than infrequent long talks – provide opportunities for your teen to discuss the challenges they face as they develop their own personal identity and make their own choices.

Bullying

Bullying at school is a serious problem and can, in extreme cases, result in injury or even death. If you suspect that your child is being bullied...

- Reassure your child that you and the teacher will support him or her.
- Talk to the teacher or person in charge.
- Follow up on any action taken and remain involved in the decision making process. Check in often with your son or daughter about how things are going.
- Keep in mind children may be reluctant to talk due to fear of embarrassment or further harm.

Sometimes problems with going back to school don't go away on their own and may reflect a health problem. Talk to your family physician or health professional about any problems – especially if they are severe or do not resolve on their own after the first few weeks back.

Renee Oler

Military Family Life Consultant

605-393-5953

renee.l.oler@mhn.com

Michelle Ruesink

Military Family Life Consultant

605-251-1582

michelle.l.ruesink@healthnet.com

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

We need soldiers from all units to help provide Military Funeral Honors for Veterans in All Communities in South Dakota.

Call 605-737-6922 or 605-357-2874 for more information.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard



International Association for Suicide Prevention



World Health Organization

● September 10, 2011

World Suicide Prevention Day

● Preventing Suicide in Multicultural Societies



www.facebook.com/800273TALK
<http://twitter.com#!/800273TALK>
www.myspace.com/800273TALK
www.youtube.com/800273TALK
<http://help.com/user/70825-lifeline>

The International Association for Suicide Prevention invites you to light a candle at 8 PM



World Suicide Prevention Day

On September 10th

World Suicide
Prevention Day

Light a candle near
a window at 8 PM

to show your support
for suicide prevention

to remember a lost loved one

and for the survivors
of suicide

iasp.info/wspd

Go online at: www.iasp.info/wspd to learn more about the events taking place on World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2011 and to view events taking place that day.



*Become a Facebook Fan of IASP
and/or Follow on Twitter:*

www.facebook.com/IASPinfo

www.twitter.com/IASPinfo

*tweeting #WSPD or #suicide or
#suicideprevention*



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK, WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AND ARMY SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH 2011

Our Army Family continues to feel the stresses and strains of almost a decade of continuous operations abroad and at home. Regrettably, we have seen this stress lead some of our Soldiers, Family members and Civilians to take their own lives. This has profound effects on Families, friends, communities and units. Every member of the Army Family plays a vital role in the success of our missions and the unity of our organizations, and we cannot afford to lose even one person to something as preventable as suicide.

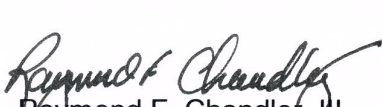
Therefore, the Army is renewing our emphasis on prevention, health and resilience by once again expanding the observation of National Suicide Prevention Week and World Suicide Prevention Day to the entire month of September. We urge commanders to host events that highlight the availability of resources, underscore the compassionate support of the command leadership, and emphasize the importance of the relationships we build within the Army Family.

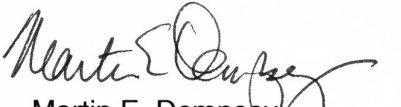
Over the last three years, we have intensified our efforts to recognize the warning signs and risk factors of suicide. We have instituted more training through the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program and have provided forums and interactive videos where suicide survivors and Families of those who lost a loved one shared their experiences and personal stories. This year, the Army will focus on illustrating stories of resilience, providing education and examples of protective factors, and conveying to our Army Family that treatment for both behavioral health and substance abuse is available and effective.

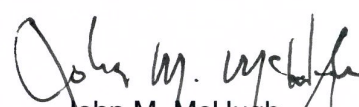
The reasons that people take their own life are very complex. We have found that effective suicide prevention and intervention activities require a continuum of services and must build on individual, family, unit and community strength.

Members of the Army Family, we urge you to work together to prevent suicide and to raise your awareness of available tools and resources. Adopt effective coping skills and turn to trusted friends and family in times of need. Help yourself by joining a support group or help someone else by volunteering. Confide in your clergy or a counselor. Maintain healthy lifestyles – get sufficient sleep, practice relaxation techniques, identify your stressors and manage them. Work with your unit's Master Resilience Trainers, who can help build these skills and help instill resilience across the Army Family.

We owe it to each other and to ourselves to fight this problem with the same unity of purpose with which we fight our wars. Together, we can make a difference.


Raymond F. Chandler, III
Sergeant Major of the Army


Martin E. Dempsey
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army

37

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255)

OCONUS – DSN Prefix – 273-TALK (8255)